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SUBJ: ARCHBISHOP OF PALERMO ON DC-PCI RELATIONS

1. SALVATORE CARDINAL PAPPALARDO, ARCHBISHOP OF PALERMO AND PRIMATE OF SICILY, IS A FORMER VATICAN DIPLOMAT APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO DJAKARTA, 1965-68). A VERY INFORMAL MAN, AND A NATIVE SICILIAN, PAPPALARDO'S UNASSUMING MANNER HAS MADE HIM A POPULAR FIGURE IN THE ISLAND.
2. ALTHOUGH GENERALLY RELUCTANT TO VENTURE INTO POLITICAL ISSUES, PAPPALARDO IS SENSITIVE TO COMMUNITY PROBLEMS AND ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS HAS SPOKEN OUT AGAINST LOCAL POLITICIANS' INATTENTION TO THE NEEDS OF THOSE THEY GOVERN.
3. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, AND GIVEN PERHAPS MORE WEIGHT BY IT,

PAGE 02 RUFRSGG8540 C O N F I D E N T I A L

CARDINAL PAPPALARDO, ON NOVEMBER 20, GAVE HIS FIRST "POLITICAL" NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW TO CATANIA'S MODERATE DAILY LA SICILIA. THE CARDINAL POINTED OUT THAT SICILIANS GAVE THE DC AN IMPORTANT VICTORY IN THE ELECTIONS OF JUNE 1976. THE VOTERS, THE CHURCH AND ALL THOSE CONCERNED THUS HAVE THE DUTY TO JUDGE PERFORMANCE UNDER THAT MANDATE. FOR ITS PART, THE CHURCH WILL SPEAK UP IF THAT MANDATE IS VIOLATED. IN SO DOING, THE CARDINAL SEES HIMSELF AS A SPOKESMAN FOR "THE COMMUNITY'S CRITICAL JUDGEMENT" AND WANTS TO AVOID ANY ACCUSATION THAT THE CHURCH IS IN COLLUSION WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN POWER.

4. ON THE STATUS OF DC-PCI RELATIONS IN SICILY, THE ARCHBISHOP REFUSED TO MAKE SPECIFIC COMMENTS, BUT STATED THAT THERE ARE NOW TWO

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PAGE 02 PALERM 00745 061346Z

POLITICAL BLOCS WHICH CANNOT AFFORD TO IGNORE EACH OTHER. HOWEVER,

"CONFUSION OF IDEAS IS NOT ADMISSABLE - A POINT THAT SHOULD BE VERY CLEAR TO THE DC".

5. COMMENT: THE SICILIAN DC HAS SHOWN NONE OF THE INNOVATIVE FERMENT THAT CHARACTERIZES, FOR EXAMPLE, THE DC IN LOMBARDY. THE CARDINAL'S INTERVIEW, THEREFORE, MAY BE JUST ANOTHER ROCK IN THE POND. INDEED, HIS REMARKS HAVE NOT, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, BEEN CIRCULATED IN PALERMO WHERE MOST OF THE ISLAND'S "CLASSE POLITICA"

PAGE 03 RUFRSGG8540 C O N F I D E N T I A L

LIVES. THE CARDINAL'S REMARKS, HOWEVER, SERVE BOTH AS AN IMPORTANT REMINDER TO THE DC AND AS A WINDOW INTO HIS OWN VIEWS ON THE CHURCH-DC-CATHOLIC VOTER RELATIONSHIP.
COLLINS

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